

Marketing & Regulatory Programs HR BROADCAST

Quarter 2 – FY 2019 Issue

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Greetings and Welcome Back!

On behalf of the HRD Leadership Team, we would like to take a moment to welcome everyone back!

We acknowledge this has been quite a challenge for us all and although there was some exempt work that the Human Resources Division (HRD) was able to perform during the 35-day furlough, there was also a great deal that HRD was unable to perform. Therefore, I would like to share some of the immediate HR priorities that align with the Departmental HR priorities.

First, I would like to say that I appreciate everyone's patience as we sort through the priorities and the backlog of work over the next few weeks.

Priorities

Our #1 priority was, and is, to ensure all of our customers receive their back pay. We had a number of folks throughout each agency that worked selflessly through many hours over this past weekend into this week so that all of our customers (APHIS, AMS, and FAS) would be paid. Eight hundred eighty-two employees only received partial paychecks for Pay Period (PP) 26 and PP 01. Our most recent concentrated push at the end of last week was to ensure that employees that received partial paychecks also received full compensation. Paying employees their back pay (attempting to make them whole) remains in the forefront by each agency's leadership team and HRD.

While ensuring that everyone gets paid, USDA has acknowledged that there were 1,000 retirements scheduled during PP 26 - PP 02 across USDA. HRD is currently working on the MRP 100+ backlog of retirements being shipped to NFC for review and processing, before going to OPM for annuity payments. We are just as committed to these individuals that are transitioning off our rolls to ensure that they land gently as they transition from the workforce into retirement.

Along with retirements, Health Benefits Open Season and Life Events that occurred during the shutdown will take next priority to ensure all employees receive their up-to-date health insurance enrollment cards.

Certificates of Eligibles will be reissued or extended, and new vacancy announcements will be posted while HRD transitions to the USAStaffing tool. HRD is already reaching out to both our customers and selectees to re-establish Enter on Duty dates.

Your continued support in this area is appreciated as we work to on-board new employees into our amazing organizations. Remember, first impressions count; people may not always remember what we did, but they do remember how they were treated. We are committed to making a positive first impression.

We recognize that there are many things that need to be addressed and caught up, and we ask for your continued support and patience as we work on these priorities on your behalf.

Thank you, and again, welcome back!

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We hope that the HR Broadcast is meeting your needs and communicating topics of interest, but if there are items you would like to see included in future issues, please contact our HR Broadcast Layout Editor, Christina Furnkranz, at Christina.S.Furnkranz@usda.gov

Beverly Ledford

Beverly Ledford, HRD Director

Quarter 2 – FY 2019 Issue

Bouncing Back After the Shutdown: Getting Back on Track in a Positive and Thoughtful Way

Unexpectedly missing even a day of work can disrupt our plans and cause us to scramble to catch up. Missing 35 days can make us question where to even begin! Whether you were furloughed or worked during the shutdown, it is likely you experienced some disruption to your work, and perhaps even experienced some negative mental and emotional stress. We have put together a few key tips to help you recover after this historic Government shutdown.



1. **Reconnect with your colleagues.** USDA employees are hardworking, talented, dedicated people. Take some time to reconnect with all of your fantastic colleagues. Everyone had a different shutdown experience. Ask about and listen to other's experiences. Share your own experience. Understand that some people may have experienced hardship during the shutdown while others may have had more positive experiences. Demonstrate empathy and provide support to your colleagues as they share their experiences.
2. **Reconnect with your mission.** Take some time to reflect on why you work at USDA. We all do important work to service the American people: safeguarding American agriculture, marketing agricultural products and ensuring fair trading practices, and improving foreign market access for U.S. products. Think about what excites and motivates you about your work. Talk about this with your colleagues and supervisor. Many people may feel frustrated or demotivated because of the shutdown. Thinking and talking about what you love about your work can help you start to get back on track.
3. **Prioritize your work.** During the shutdown, many tasks went undone and many deadlines have come and gone. We also have upcoming deadlines and projects that now seem more urgent because of mixed work. Think about which tasks and projects are the most urgent and important. There are many tools available to help you organize and document your work and set priorities. You can start by asking questions like: Who will be impacted by this work? What are the consequences if it is late or undone? Which tasks will have the greatest impact?
4. **Pace yourself.** APHIS Administrator Kevin Shea said, "You can't make up in 5 days what you missed in 5 weeks." Once you have prioritized your work, set a schedule for tackling your highest priority and work on a realistic timeline. Don't plan on working unreasonable hours or skipping lunches. If you try to take on too much work, too fast, this can lead to lower quality work, lower morale, and burnout. Devote the time and attention that your priority tasks require and you will achieve better, more sustainable results.
5. **Ask for, and offer, help.** Much of our work requires collaboration with peers, supervisors, and other stakeholders. In the first few days and weeks following the shutdown, there is a heightened understanding of the challenges created by the shutdown. People will be more willing to collaborate and offer support. Take advantage of this opportunity to build better, more productive relationships. You can also extend your support and assistance to others. Your colleagues will be very appreciative of any help that you can provide, and they will likely reciprocate. If you wait for days and weeks after the shutdown, that sense of shared understanding will diminish and your colleagues will become more focused on their own projects and goals. Asking for, and offering, assistance early in the process will be most effective.

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6. **Celebrate the early wins.** Digging out from weeks of backlog can be overwhelming. We must take on tasks one at a time. It is important to acknowledge when some of the early priority tasks have been completed, both yours and others. When you take time to acknowledge early accomplishments, it can create a sense of momentum. Then the remaining work seems less daunting and more achievable. Providing praise and recognition to others can help keep morale high and spread that sense of momentum to the entire team.
7. **Don't do anything drastic.** In times of extreme stress, people often take drastic actions. They may lash out at coworkers or supervisors. They may contemplate changing jobs or careers. They may behave in ways that they would never behave in a normal situation. In times like this, it is important to remember that this is a temporary challenge and your work will eventually get back on track. Don't make drastic decisions with long term or permanent repercussions in response to a temporary time of stress.
8. **Make a plan, but stay flexible.** Planning is vital to dealing with an increased workload with short timelines. However, there will be new opportunities and challenges that arise in the coming days and weeks. You may need to take time to reevaluate your priorities on a regular basis. This will keep you focusing on the future while you are dealing with the work of the past.
9. **Take advantage of resources.** You are not alone in your struggle to recover from the shutdown. There are many people who are dealing with similar challenges. There are resources out there for dealing with stress, facing financial difficulties, or trying to do more with less.

The **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** offers many resources to help employees deal with stress and anxiety:

- [USDA: EAP](#)
- [AMS: Benefits and Services](#)
- [AMS: Work Life Program](#)
- [APHIS: EAP](#)

Center for Training and Organization Development has course offerings, as soon as next week, that could provide you with information and practical tools to help you support yourself and others during this time:

- [Requests, Offers & Promises: Communication that Builds Trust](#)
- [A Primer in Change: Kotter's Model](#)
- [5 Choices to Extraordinary Productivity](#)
- [InsideOut GROW Coaching](#)
- [Managing Self through Transition](#)
- [Speed of Trust](#)
- [Making Powerful Declarations](#)

More Resources

- [Empathy Video](#): Dr. Brene Brown discusses the power of connecting with others to get through hard times.
- Gov Loop Article – [Going Back to Work After an Extended Absence](#)
- Gov Loop Article – [Funds Still Available for Furloughed Workers](#)
- [Federal Education and Assistance Fund](#) – This organization provides emergency financial assistance to federal workers.

Resources for supervisors and leaders:

- Govexec article for supervisors: [How to Help Your Team Be Productive Post Shutdown.](#)
- [Partnership for Public Service Resources](#) – This group hosts a great blog that addresses the issues that federal supervisors face.

By staying focused on what drives and inspires us, taking care of ourselves, and supporting our colleagues, we can recover and get back on track with our work. Remember, our first job is to reconnect with and support each other. We can't make up in 5 days what we missed in 5 weeks.



Transition to USA Staffing and Onboarding

by **Nancy Bradford** (*Nancy.L.Bradford@usda.gov, 612-336-3391*)

In February 2019, the Human Resources Division will transition from the current hiring and onboarding solutions (eRecruit & Intelliworx Onboarding) to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) USA Staffing and Onboarding products. The transition is a component of the Department's strategy for improving the hiring process and is being implemented within each mission area of USDA. This integrated talent acquisition system is used by 80% of Federal Government Human Resources offices to efficiently and effectively recruit, evaluate, assess, certify, select, and onboard their new hires.

As the Human Resources staff ramps up for the changeover to USA Staffing, there will continue to be a period of time where we will focus our efforts on conducting application qualification determinations and issuing certificates of eligible for positions announced in eRecruit. This may result in a delay for recruit actions as we will begin piloting the announcement of positions within USA Staffing on February 4, 2019.

What you need to know as a Hiring Official, is that your role in hiring will remain the same, but you will be utilizing a new tool to facilitate the hiring and selection processes. USA Staffing offers a modern, user friendly interface, with some additional added benefits:

- Downloadable applicant information in order to review documents and make certificate selections
- Automated notifications that a job announcement is ready for your review
- Ability to make proposed edits to an announcement inside the system
- Enhanced hiring official interface to track what reviews (certificates or vacancy announcements) are issued to you
- Improved reporting functionality to track the effectiveness of recruitment methods and strategies over time by series, grade, location, program, etc.
- Accessibility to the Tentative and Final Offer letters sent to the new hires

Human Resources will be offering Hiring Official webinars in early to mid-February, please watch for these announcements!!



Technology At Work

Persons with disabilities who need program information in alternate formats (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY).



Noncompetitive Hiring and Employment

While we are getting up and running in USAStaffing, remember that there are non-competitive hiring authorities that do not require an announcement.

Veterans' Recruitment Appointment (VRA)

Veterans' Recruitment Appointment (VRA) is an excepted authority that allows agencies to appoint eligible veterans without competition.

The candidate must be either:

- in receipt of a campaign badge for service during a war or in a campaign or expedition; OR
- a disabled veteran, OR
- in receipt of an Armed forces Service Medal for participation in a military operation, OR
- a recently separated veteran (within the last 3 years), AND
- separated under honorable conditions (this means an honorable or general discharge).



30% or More Disabled Veteran

The 30% or More Disabled Veteran authority allows any veteran with a 30% or more service-connected disability to be non-competitively appointed.

A candidate must be either:

- retired from active military service with a service-connected disability rating of 30% or more; OR
- have a rating by the Department of Veterans Affairs showing a compensable service-connected disability of 30% or more, AND
- separated under honorable conditions (this means an honorable or general discharge).

Schedule A Appointing Authority for People with Disabilities

The Schedule A authority for people with disabilities is an excepted authority that agencies can use to appoint individuals who have a severe physical, psychological, or intellectual disability. To be eligible, the candidate must show proof of disability. Documentation may be from any licensed medical professional (e.g., a physician or other medical professional certified by a State, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. Territory to practice medicine), a licensed vocational rehabilitation specialist (i.e., State or private), or any Federal or State agency, or agency of the District of Columbia or a U.S. territory that issues or provides disability benefits.



Have you tried recruitment with the Pathways Recent Graduates Program?

The Recent Graduates Program affords developmental experiences in the Federal Government intended to promote possible careers in the civil service to individuals who have recently graduated from qualifying educational institutions or programs. To be eligible, applicants must apply within 2 years of degree or certificate completion (except for veterans precluded from doing so due to their military service obligation, who have up to 6 years after degree completion to apply). Successful applicants are placed in a dynamic, developmental program with the potential to lead to a civil service career in the Federal Government. The program lasts for 1 year (unless the training requirements of the position warrant a longer and more structured training program). Here are some key provisions of the Recent Graduates Program.

Eligibility

- Recent graduates who have completed, within the previous two years, a qualifying associates, bachelors, master's, professional, doctorate, vocational or technical degree or certificate from a qualifying educational institution
 - To qualify based on completion of a certificate program, the program must have been equivalent to at least one academic year of full-time study that was part of an accredited curriculum
- Veterans unable to apply within two years of receiving their degree, due to military service obligation, have as much as six years after degree completion to apply
- US Citizen
- Age 16 or older



Program Administration

- Each agency must sign a Participant Agreement with the Recent Graduate that sets forth the terms and conditions of the program.
- Agencies must post information on <http://www.usajobs.gov> about how to apply for specific positions.
- Grade level limitations apply:
 - Initial appointment may be made up to the GS-09 level or equivalent (including wage- grade)
 - Initial appointment to science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM) positions may be made at the GS-11 level (Ph.D. degree or equivalent degree directly related to STEM position required)
 - Initial appointment to scientific and professional research positions at the GS-11 level (Master's degree or equivalent graduate degree directly related to the position required)
 - Initial appointment to scientific and professional research positions at the GS-12 level (Ph.D. or equivalent degree directly related to position required)

Training and Development

- Mentorship throughout the program
- Individual Development Plan to create and track Recent Graduates' career planning, professional development, and training activities
- At least 40 hours of formal, interactive training
- Positions offer opportunity for career advancement

Recent Graduates - Program Completion and Conversion

- Recent Graduates may be converted to a permanent position (or, in some limited circumstances, a term appointment lasting 1-4 years).
- To be eligible for conversion, Recent Graduates must have:
 - Successfully completed at least 1-year of continuous service in addition to all requirements stated in the Participant Agreement
 - Demonstrate successful job performance
 - Met the qualifications for the position to which they will be converted
 - Completed an annual Individual Development Plan (IDP) with their supervisor
 - Completed 40 hours of formal training



eTracker Reminder!

by **Nancy Bradford** (Nancy.L.Bradford@usda.gov, 612-336-3391)

The eTracker application requires that all personnel requests be approved by an Authorizing Official before they can be routed to Human Resources in Minneapolis. The selection of the appropriate Authorizing Official is completely up to individual staffs/divisions/programs and your Administrative or Resource Management Offices may have provided guidance to you on who the appropriate person is for you to select. If this specific guidance has not been provided, please carefully consider who you identify in that role. In the 90 days since eTracker's go live date; we have found several SF52's that were created by an Initiator, but never approved by the Authorizing Official. Authorizing Officials do receive an email message from this email address: eTracker@GDCII.com.

There are three statuses to be aware of:

- Initiated - Created by an Initiator but not yet submitted to the Authorizing Official
- Requestor Complete - Submitted by the Initiator but not yet approved by the Authorizing Official
- Authorized - Approved by the Authorizing Official and awaiting action by Human Resources

If you were identified as any one of the four types of Contacts on the eTracker request, you can track the status by logging into eTracker and looking at your My Requests view. If you see a status of Initiated or Requestor Complete – this indicates that the request is awaiting action by the Initiator or the Authorizing Official. They may need an email to remind them to take the appropriate action.

Employee Exit Survey

by **Patricia Flower** (Patricia.A.Flower@usda.gov, 202-799-7082)

As part of USDA's ongoing employee engagement effort, significant emphasis has been placed within MRP on gathering employee opinions through listening sessions, websites and portals, the Employee Viewpoint Survey, and various other methods. Information is also needed from employees who leave the MRP agencies, and because of that, a web-based process is in place for individuals to complete an online exit survey. The exit survey gives employees the opportunity to communicate their reasons for leaving, perceptions of the work environment, and overall satisfaction with their agency.

In order to ensure that departing employees are notified of the exit survey, HRD has an exit survey coordinator to facilitate the process. Pat Flower of the Human Resources Division, HR Systems and Reporting Branch, is the exit survey coordinator and can be reached at 202-799-7082, or by email at Patricia.A.Flower@usda.gov.



The following procedures should be followed: Supervisors, administrative officers, assigned designees, or departing employees should contact the exit survey coordinator to obtain the link to the exit survey website. If the departing employee does not have internet capabilities, a hard copy can also be requested from the exit survey coordinator.



Awards Policy Reminder

by Lynn Doetschman (Lynn.H.Doetschman@usda.gov, 301-851-2891)

From
The
Policy
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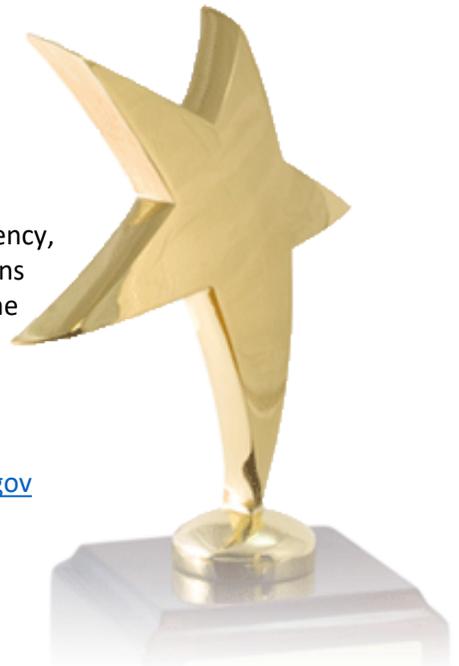
USDA awards and recognition policy requires that awards exceeding \$5,500 be submitted for approval by the Secretary's office via the respective Under Secretary and the Office of Human Resources Management. Approval must be obtained before the award can be processed. The policy is for non-senior executive and non-foreign service awards and applies to:

- Single awards over \$5,500.
- Multiple awards paid to an employee, *effective in the same Fiscal Year*, that together exceed \$5,500. The policy applies regardless of funding year, and even if the contributions being recognized occurred in different fiscal years.
- All awards paid to an employee, whether the awards were to the individual, or whether the employee was part of a team receiving a group award.
- Awards paid from another organization's budget. This is important to remember when proposing or approving cross-program or cross-agency awards. An award given to an employee outside the normal line of supervision counts toward the \$5,500 threshold the same as an award given by the employee's own program.

Making sure to complete these two tasks on every award form (AD-287-2) can help programs in adhering to the policy:

- ✓ Always fill out Block 10, "List Awards or QSIs in the Last 52 Weeks (type of award, amount received, and the effective date)." If you are completing an award form and don't have access to this information for the proposed recipient, contact your Administrative Officer/Resource Management staff, or your servicing HR processing assistant for help.
- ✓ If the proposed award is for an employee in another program or agency, always contact the 'other' supervisor to ensure there are no concerns and that the employee has not already been recognized for the same body of work.

If you have general questions about this policy, the approval process, or questions about whether awards for a particular employee may be reaching the threshold, please contact me at Lynn.H.Doetschman@usda.gov or (301) 851-2891. You can also find more information in [MRP Directive 4451.1, Awards and Recognition](#) and its attachments.



Guidance for Weather Emergencies

by **Tara Abramowitz** (Tara.L.Abramowitz@usda.gov, 301-851-2883)
and **Nella Roberts** (Nella.Roberts@usda.gov, 301-851-2910)



Winter weather has arrived in many parts of the USA! No matter what the weather emergency, it is important to be prepared to continue to carry out the Agency’s mission. Being prepared means knowing what the emergency weather announcements, such as “Federal Offices are OPEN under Unscheduled Leave / Unscheduled Telework” or “Federal Offices are CLOSED to the Public,” mean and how they apply to you. For MRP employees, a “Federal Offices are **OPEN** under Unscheduled Leave / Unscheduled Telework” announcement means that you may either take leave or telework instead of reporting to the office. This type of announcement covers regularly scheduled and ad hoc employees with telework agreements. If you opt for unscheduled telework under this scenario and your power goes out, you must either report to the office or take leave for the remainder of your workday.

An announcement of “Federal Offices are **CLOSED** to the Public” means that all employees who have approved telework agreements must telework. This includes regularly scheduled telework, ad hoc telework, etc. Due to the new law on Weather and Safety Leave (WSL), employees will **no** longer receive up to 2 hours of administrative leave on the day of a closure to take care of personal needs related to the closure, such as pumping water from flooded areas, etc. Leave must be used for these purposes. If the office is closed and your power goes out while teleworking, you will be granted administrative leave. However, if your power returns during your regularly scheduled workday, you are required to resume work.

In any of the above scenarios, please adhere to the following:

- Contact your supervisor to tell him/her that you are safe;
- Advise your supervisor of your choice to telework or take leave;
- Ensure you have your laptop and any other necessary equipment, paperwork, etc. at home with you. If you are out of the office, e.g., on leave or it is your day off prior to one of the above announcements, you may need to go to the office to pick up your equipment in order to be able to telework when bad weather is affecting your area.
- If you are not prepared to telework, i.e., you do not have your laptop or other necessary equipment or supplies, you must take leave.



For more information about operations during a weather-related emergency, either within the DC metro area or in the field, please see: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/business-services/forms_publications/hr_desk_guide/hrdg_4630/4630_sub_d_sec_b#weather



Updated Weather Dismissal/Closure Procedures from OPM

by **Tara Abramowitz** (Tara.L.Abramowitz@usda.gov, 301-851-2883)
and **Nella Roberts** (Nella.Roberts@usda.gov, 301-851-2910)

From
The
Policy
Branch

Recently, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) updated the [Government-wide Dismissal and Closure Procedures](#) handbook for federal employees. The update implements the portion of the Administrative Leave Act of 2016 dealing with Weather and Safety Leave (WSL). WSL is a form of administrative leave (TC 66) used during weather and other emergencies. In response, the Human Resources Policy Branch has updated the MRP Human Resources Desk Guide Subchapter 4630, [Absence and Leave](#). Below are the highlights:

- WSL may only be granted if an employee is prevented from safely traveling to or safely performing work at an approved location due to:
 - An act of God;
 - A terrorist attack; or
 - Another condition which prevents an employee or group of employees from safely traveling to or safely performing work at an approved location.
- There is no cap on the number of hours of WSL that may be granted in a calendar year.
- WSL does not apply to and may not be granted due to mass transit / commuting problems unrelated to safety matters.
- When a major event is reasonably anticipated, employees may not change the regularly scheduled day off or scheduled leave in order to receive WSL.
- If a significant event or condition is predicted / reasonably anticipated, all teleworkers are to be prepared to telework.



During early dismissal scenarios, this means that nonemergency:

- Non-telework participants will be granted WSL from the time of early dismissal to the end of the regularly scheduled tour of duty for that day.
- Telework participants (regularly scheduled and ad hoc/situational) will be granted WSL for the time needed to commute home. Once at home a teleworker is expected to telework or request leave from the time of arrival at home to the end of the regularly scheduled tour of duty for that day.
- Scheduled teleworkers will continue to work or request leave.
- Employees on pre-approved leave remain on leave.

During closure scenarios, nonemergency, non-teleworkers will receive WSL for their regularly scheduled tour of duty for the day. Teleworkers are expected to be prepared to telework or take leave. Exception: The [USDA Telework Directive](#) does not permit teleworking when there is a child or elder present who is not capable of self-care. Since the employee is not permitted to telework and s/he cannot safely travel to or perform work at the regular office location due to the closure, management may grant WSL. For example, when a small child is present who is incapable of self-care and no other care is available then the home location is considered an unapproved worksite.



New USDA Performance Management Directive

by Gwen Montgomery (Gwen.Montgomery@usda.gov, 301-851-2928)

From
The
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The new USDA Performance Management Directive ([DR-4040-430](#)) requires completion of quarterly progress reviews for all eligible employees. The performance cycle begins on October 1 and ends on September 30 of each year. **Quarterly reviews must be completed no later than 30 days from the end of each quarter.**

We are now in the 2nd quarter of the FY2019 performance cycle. Please ensure all 2nd quarter reviews are completed no later than **April 30, 2019**. Due to the shutdown, some supervisors may not have been able to complete 1st quarter reviews. Those supervisors may count the end of the cycle discussion/issuance of FY2019 plans meeting (which occurred in October) as satisfying the 1st quarter review requirement. The FY2019 Performance Management calendar is available on the [MRP Performance Management webpage](#) for your reference.

If you have any questions, please contact Gwen Montgomery at (301) 851-2928 or via email.

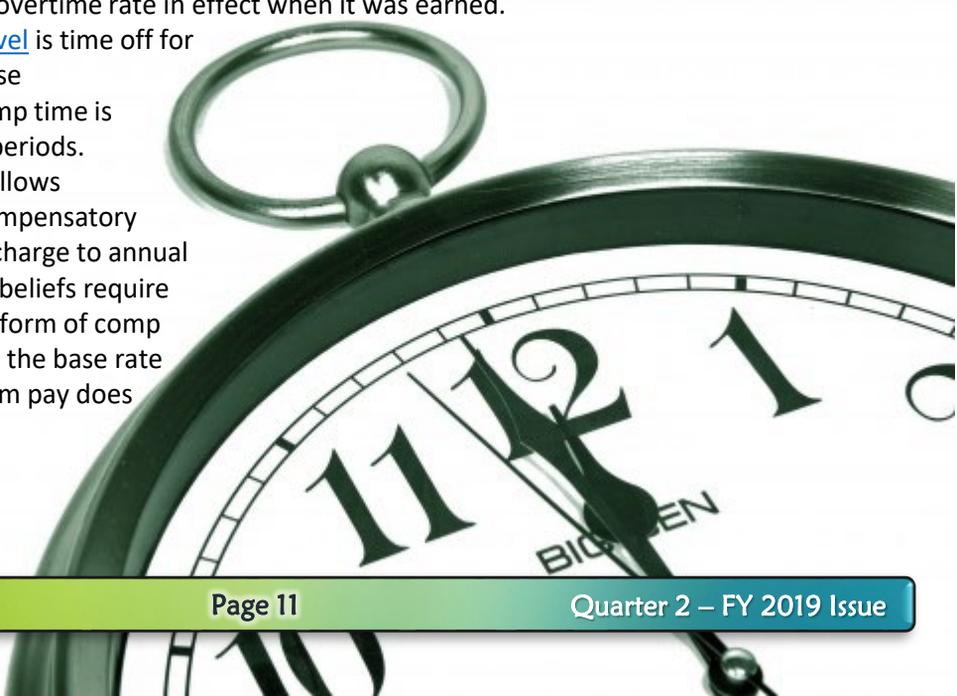


Isn't All Compensatory Time (Comp Time) the Same?

by Nella Roberts (Nella.Roberts@usda.gov, 301-851-2910)

No, all compensatory time is not the same. In the Federal Government there are three basic forms of comp time: Compensatory time off in lieu of overtime pay, compensatory time off for travel, and religious compensatory time. The following is a brief description of each along with links for more detailed information.

1. [Comp time off in lieu of overtime pay](#) is time off with pay in lieu of overtime pay for irregular or occasional overtime work, **or** for those under maxiflex, it's time off with pay in lieu of overtime pay for regularly scheduled or irregular or occasional overtime work. This form of comp time must be used within 26 pay periods or it is paid out at the overtime rate in effect when it was earned.
2. [Compensatory time off for travel](#) is time off for travel time that is not otherwise compensable. This form of comp time is lost if not used within 26 pay periods.
3. [Religious compensatory time](#) allows employees to earn and use compensatory time to take time off without charge to annual leave when personal religious beliefs require their absence from work. This form of comp time, if not used, is paid out at the base rate at the end of the year; premium pay does not apply.



Pre-Tax Parking Benefit Program

by Tara Abramowitz (Tara.L.Abramowitz@usda.gov, 301-851-2883)

From
The
Policy
Branch



The MRP Pre-Tax Parking Benefit Program applies to employees who park at eligible parking locations (e.g., Metro parking lot, commercial parking lot, privately-owned parking lot, parking lot, parking meter, or employer-provided parking) **and** who take mass transit, serve as the primary driver in a vanpool or serve as the primary driver in a carpool of two or more persons to commute to work.

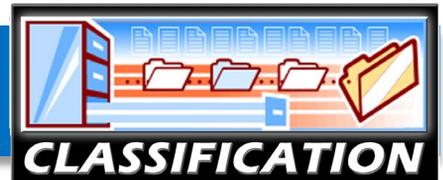
The Pre-Tax Parking Benefit Program is an employee pre-tax (excludes certain parking expenses from the employee's taxable income) authorization only. There is no cost to MRP. The current monthly maximum pre-tax parking benefit amount is \$260.

Eligible employees must complete an AD-1185 (Pre-Tax Parking Application) and submit it to their local Transit Benefits Coordinator (TBC) for signature. Once signed, the TBC will forward it on to the Human Resources Division, Processing Section.

*Drivers, alternate drivers, and passengers of vanpools and carpools who receive a free Federal parking benefit, are not eligible.

Mergers and Reorganizations Updates

By Mandy Olson (Mandy.M.Olson@usda.gov, 612-336-3295) and
Tom Lehner (Thomas.D.Lehner@usda.gov, 612-336-3291)



In order to improve customer service, increase operational efficiency, and maximize collaboration between agencies that serve similar customers, Secretary Perdue announced the merger and reorganization of a number of offices within our mission areas.

Instead of having commodity grading and inspection in multiple United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) agencies, the Grain Inspection, Packers, and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) was successfully merged into the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS). In addition, this restructured program area also absorbed the Warehouse Act functions provided by the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

Another significant initiative involved the consolidation of Information Technology components within the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and AMS programs. These functions were recently merged with the Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP) Information Technology group to reduce redundancies. The clean-up phase is currently under way, consisting of updating position descriptions and coversheets to correspond with organizational structure changes. Due to the significance of these mergers, this phase can be a lengthy process and the Classification Team appreciates your understanding during this part of the process.



The Civil Rights staffs of both AMS and APHIS are scheduled to merge together in FY19 based on Secretary Perdue's initiative as well. All impacted employees will need to be realigned into the appropriate organizational structure to accommodate this initiative. Once the realignment process is complete, there will also be a clean-up phase similar to the previously mentioned mergers.

There are several other program specific reorganization projects occurring in tandem with the Secretary-initiated mergers. Your patience is appreciated as the Classification Team works to complete these tasks as timely as possible.

Feel free to contact your Classification service provider with any questions:
https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/business-services/contact_us/hrd/hrd





New Direct Hire Appointing Authorities

By Martha Gravagna (Martha.L.Gravagna@usda.gov, 612-336-3355)

The USDA Office of Human Resources Management issued guidance on the use of the nationwide direct hire authorities issued by the Office of Personnel Management on October 11, 2018, for the following occupations in the Scientific, Technical, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) category and Cybersecurity and related positions. These authorities may be used to make competitive service career/career-conditional, term, or temporary appointments.

Scientific, Technical, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) Occupations – This authority expires October 11, 2023.

Position Title	Occupational Series	Grade Levels
Economist	GS-0110	GS-11 through 15
Biological Science	GS-0401	GS-11 through 15
Fishery Biologist	GS-0482	GS-11 through 15
General Engineer	GS-0801	GS-11 through 15
Civil Engineer	GS-0810	GS-11 through 15
Physical Sciences	GS-1301, 1306, 1310, 1320 only	GS-11 through 15
Actuary	GS-1510	GS-11 through 15
Mathematics	GS-1520	GS-11 through 15
Mathematical Statistician & Statistician	GS-1529, 1530	GS-11 through 15
Acquisitions	GS-1102	GS-11 through 15

Cybersecurity and Related Occupations – This authority may be used indefinitely or until OPM terminates the authority.

Position Title	Occupational Series	Grade Levels
Computer Engineers (Cybersecurity)	GS-0854	GS-12 through 15
Computer Scientists (Cybersecurity)	GS-1550	GS-12 through 15
Electronics Engineers (Cybersecurity)	GS-0855	GS-12 through 15
IT Cybersecurity Specialist**	GS-2210	GS-12 through 15

**These positions must require IT knowledge and IT competencies, the work must be coded to include cybersecurity functions as supported by the job codes in the [Guide to DataStandards](#) and the [NICE Cybersecurity Workforce Framework, 2017](#), and the cybersecurity work must be performed the majority of the time.

How does using a direct hire authority differ from filling jobs through case examining procedures?

- Applicants aren't scored, i.e., no assessment questions or ratings assigned by a panel
- Applicants are only required to meet minimum (basic) qualifications for the announced position and are not assigned to quality categories
- Veterans' preference doesn't apply in either the referral or selection process
- All basically qualified applicants are referred on the certificate in alphabetical order
- The hiring manager can select any of the candidates referred on the certificate

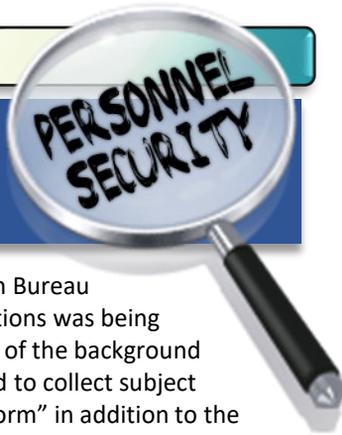
What aspects of using a direct hire authority are the same as when using case examining procedures?

- A classified position description is required
- Vacancy announcements must be posted on USAJOBS for a minimum of 5 business days
- Applicants must apply to the announcement during the open period
- HRO evaluates applications against OPM qualification standards and issues certificates by grade level
- Certificates are valid for 90 days

Questions

Please contact your [servicing Human Resources Specialist in Staffing](#) for assistance.





Supplement Form for Public Trust – Moderate Risk Background Investigation

By Steve Crescini (*Steven.A.Crescini@usda.gov, 612-336-3285*)

On June 15, 2018, Personnel Security was notified by the National Background and Investigation Bureau (NBIB) that a Supplemental Questionnaire for Public Trust-Moderate Risk Background Investigations was being implemented to augment the investigative process in an effort to screen the Interview element of the background investigation and help reduce the 700,000+ backlog cases at OPM. Agencies have been directed to collect subject responses to the questions in a distributed “Additional Questions for Moderate Risk Positions Form” in addition to the Standard Form 85P prior to agency review and submission of the investigative package. The Additional Questions for Moderate Risk Positions form from the subject must be submitted as an attachment to the eQIP investigative package on all future initiations as well as for those Public Trust – Moderate Risk Investigations that have been submitted over the past 2 years.

If you have a Public Trust-Moderate Risk Position Sensitivity Code (PSC) of 5N and you have an investigation due in the coming months, you can expect to receive the eQIP initiation notification as well as a Supplemental Questionnaire as part of the investigative process. Personnel Security has already processed over 200 Supplemental Questionnaires since June 2018 for past Public Trust – Moderate Risk Background Investigations and will continue to support the NBIB initiative until further guidance is provided regarding the required submission of the form. There have been rumors that that if you receive this form, that there is something in your background investigation process that has flagged you for negative information but this is incorrect. As mentioned above, this form is a vehicle to help try and reduce the 700,000 backlog of cases. The Personnel Security Section is prepared to assist any employee that receives the email identifying him/her for an upcoming Public Trust – Moderate Risk Background Investigation with the form, if needed.

Updating Position Sensitivity Codes (PCS) for Positions

By Steve Crescini (*Steven.A.Crescini@usda.gov, 612-336-3285*)

In January 2018, Personnel Security was audited by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and one of the findings was that many employees have not updated their background investigations to reflect their Position Sensitivity Codes (PSC) for their current position. This is most likely the result of employees getting selected for new positions that resulted in a new PSC. Many of those identified in the audit are long term employees (some with 30+ years) that have not had a new investigation since their initial onboarding. Personnel Security is in the process of identifying those that will require an updated investigation, but it is incumbent on the supervisor to ensure the employee has the correct background investigation identified by the PSC in the Position Description (PD) for that position. If you are unsure of what the PSC should be for the position, please reach out to your respective Program Service Provider to discuss the PSC level. To comply with the requirements of the findings, employees identified will need to complete a new Declaration of Federal Employment (OF-306) form and then scan or email it back to Personnel Security as OPM requires that the OF-306 be submitted as part of the investigative process. Once the form is received, the employee will be initiated into the e-QIP portal so he/she can complete his/her security questionnaire. If additional documents are needed, the employee will be contacted on what is required and how to provide them, such as the Public Trust – Moderate Supplemental Form recently initiated by the NBIB for all positions with a PSC of 5N. Personnel Security has initiated over 50 updated Background Investigations identified by the OPM audit and continues to initiate the remaining cases identified with the goal of having all cases identified in the audit initiated by January 2019. A valid Background Investigation is a condition of employment so Personnel Security is working hard to initiate as many background investigations on the audit list as possible to ensure the employee has the correct and appropriate background investigation based on their position’s PSC.





Unsatisfactory Attendance

By Employee & Management Services Directorate

In this issue of the HR Broadcast, we will look at one of the most common conduct problems that we, as supervisors and managers, may encounter— **Unsatisfactory Attendance**, and, its close cousin, **Sick Leave Abuse**.

“Amy” has worked for the agency for several years. She has always been a good worker – good, that is, when she is actually at work. Unfortunately, that hasn’t been too often, lately. Amy has a couple of problems. First, she can’t seem to get to work on time, consistently. There’s always some excuse – the car didn’t start, the alarm clock didn’t ring, she had a problem getting her child to daycare and, of course, the ever popular “traffic problems.” All good excuses, to be sure, except when they occur week after week. The other problem is that Amy uses significant amounts of sick leave, generally 1 or 2 days at a time. These problems have become very disruptive, and you’ve realized that you need to do something.



First, a few observations derived from customers seeking guidance:

- **Employees**, not supervisors, are **responsible for obtaining and presenting** administratively acceptable **evidence of illness or injury** *when requested*;
- **Employees**, not supervisors, **are responsible** for doing whatever is necessary **to get to work on time**;
- **Fair treatment is not the same as identical treatment**. Employees who come to work on time and do not overuse/abuse sick leave should be treated differently from those who are chronically tardy and/or abuse sick leave;
- **Most absenteeism is self-inflicted**. Supervisors can reduce or eliminate absenteeism by approving sick leave only when it is appropriate, and by acting promptly to stop tardiness.
- Except for pre-approved medical examinations, **employees** who are **not completely incapacitated for all available work should not be placed on sick leave**. If work is available within the limitations specified in the employee’s medical documentation, he/she can be assigned to such work rather than be placed on sick leave.
- **Employees may be disciplined for failing to follow procedures** for requesting sick leave.
- **Supervisors**, not employees, **are responsible for determining when sick leave is appropriate**. Supervisors may require employees to present medical documentation that specifies what duties or functions they cannot perform. General conclusions such as “unable to work” or “off work for 3 weeks” usually do not provide sufficient information to make a decision whether sick leave is appropriate.
- **Supervisors can require medical documentation** when:
 1. an employee has been previously given a leave restriction letter;
 2. an employee has been absent due to illness for more than 3 days;
 3. there is reason to suspect that an employee is not actually sick or injured *regardless of the number of days the employee has been absent*.

In regard to item (3), please contact your servicing employee relations specialist before initiating action.

Continue reading on next page (page 16)





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There are a number of options for dealing with tardiness and other attendance problems. The first is **counseling**, which should begin as soon as the problem becomes apparent. To delay this, or any other corrective action, invites trouble since it conveys the notion to the offending employee that the behavior is acceptable (or at least will not be challenged), thereby making correction more difficult. When counseling an employee, don't forget about the **Discussion Model** described in the **February 2018 HR Broadcast**. [NOTE: At first, you may decide not to document an attendance problem, and just handle it informally. However, if the problem persists, begin documenting immediately.]

After **counseling**, additional options may include:

- (1) **issuing** the employee written notice placing her/him on **leave restriction**;
- (2) **placing** the employee on **Absence Without Official Leave (AWOL)**;
- (3) **changing** the employee's **assignment** or **hours of duty**, if possible;
- (4) **issuing** a **letter of caution** and/or **letter of instruction**;
- (5) **disciplinary action**; and,
- (6) **referring** the employee to the **Employee Assistance Program**.

When these various options should be initiated will generally be the supervisor's determination, but once again, early intervention is advisable.

When sick leave abuse is suspected, it is also important to act quickly, particularly since these problems generally take more time to resolve than other attendance problems. The first task is to figure out when does leave *usage* constitute abuse. This determination is somewhat subjective, but a couple of **indicators** may include a **low sick leave balance** and/or the **repeated use of sick leave**, 1 or 2 days at a time, when there is little or no evidence of a chronic medical condition. Once again, **counseling** is the best place to start. If that does not work, issuing a **leave restriction letter** may be a viable option before exploring corrective action (formal disciplinary) options.



A Leave Restriction letter requires the employee to get a medical certificate or other administratively-acceptable documentation each time he/she requests **unscheduled leave**, regardless of the **type of leave** requested. For all absences related to illness, a medical "note" from an employee's healthcare provider is typically acceptable. If an employee's unscheduled leave is due to a request for emergency annual or LWOP, (flat tire, broken water heater/furnace, etc.) documentation substantiating the emergency would typically be

required (a note from the automotive repair shop; a letter from the utility company or HVAC repair company). Your servicing employee relations specialist can help you draft a leave restriction letter, as well as explore other options if the letter does not solve the problem.

Continue reading on next page (page 17)





ABSENCE WITHOUT OFFICIAL LEAVE

Absence without Official Leave (AWOL) is an absence from duty, without pay, for which an employee has not requested and/or been granted any type of leave, including leave without pay (LWOP). Remember that LWOP is an approved absence. **DO NOT** grant LWOP, if you have not approved an employee's absence.

So, when do you charge an employee with AWOL?

Let's suppose one of your employees does not show up for work and fails to call in to request leave. Would you charge the employee with AWOL? Yes. Okay, you've charged this employee with AWOL. However, the employee returns to work the following day with documentation showing that he/she was involved in a vehicle accident and was unconscious for 24 hours. Would you change the AWOL to an approved absence? Of course. (Good answer!) Each situation must be considered independently. While an absence which is not approved should be charged as AWOL, it doesn't necessarily mean that you will issue discipline, as a result of the AWOL. And, it is sometimes appropriate to change the AWOL retroactively to an approved leave category, if the circumstances warrant.

Now let's suppose one of your employees is arrested, placed in jail, and calls you to request annual leave.

Would you approve his/her leave request?

First, you must ask yourself a few questions:

1) Would you have approved the leave request if the employee was not incarcerated?

Annual Leave should not be disapproved just because the employee is incarcerated.

2) What impact will the employee's absence have on the workplace? The use of leave is conditional on the needs of the Federal service. You should consider whether the absence is during a peak workload period and would create a serious shortage of staff. You should also consider whether the employee is a key individual with indispensable skills.

3) What is the expected duration of the absence? If the absence due to incarceration extends beyond what you would normally approve for other purposes, you can then begin charging the employee with AWOL. You should, however, contact your servicing employee relations specialist to discuss first. In such situations, there may be other issues that need to be addressed.

4) What if your employee fails to return from lunch for 3 hours and is not on approved leave? Sounds like AWOL to me.

We all know that every situation is not a text book case, so if you are unsure about charging an employee with AWOL, please contact your servicing employee relations specialist. AWOL is not itself considered to be disciplinary in nature; however, disciplinary action may be warranted based on the AWOL. If you have charged an employee with AWOL, contact your servicing employee relations specialist to discuss possible corrective action.

The Flexible Work Problem. The use of flexible work schedules is a great benefit to agency employees, and, at the same time, may occasionally create headaches for supervisors. Supervisors need to remember that flexible schedules do not change the basic rules regarding leave usage described above. And, as always, the need to accomplish a unit's (the agency's) required work takes priority over individual preferences for a particular schedule. If employees must work a full 8 hours daily during heavy work periods, for example, then they need to be told that this is the case. Also, it is not permissible to combine work breaks with unpaid lunch periods. Breaks are not required by regulation, but are compensable rest periods designed to give employees an opportunity to break for a short time from their work to recharge their physical and mental batteries.



Test Your Knowledge

**Labor
Management
& Employee
Relations**



C. NEPOTISM. 5 U.S.C. § 3110

<p>You may not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appoint, employ, promote, or advance your relative. ▪ Advocate appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement of your relative to a position in USDA over which have jurisdiction or control (not just your agency or component). 	<p>Exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A preference eligible (veteran) within reach for selection from an appropriate certificate of eligibles under certain circumstances; ▪ To meet urgent needs resulting from an emergency situation posing an immediate threat to life or property; ▪ To meet special scientific needs; or ▪ At isolated field stations or where there is a shortage of quarters.
<p>This statute applies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To your relatives; ▪ To relatives of any USDA “public official” if that person has advocated the above action; or ▪ To relatives of any “public official” with jurisdiction/control over USDA, your agency or component, if that official has advocated the above action. 	<p>An employee may supervise a relative when management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finds that all merit-related provisions of Federal law have been observed; ▪ Determines that such supervision would result in a net benefit to the government; and ▪ Assigns a non-related individual as manager to conduct performance evaluations and recommend promotions or advancements.

RULE: You may not show favoritism on the basis of family relationship. **“Relative”** means an individual who is related to an employee as a father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, first cousin, nephew, niece, husband, wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepson, stepdaughter, stepbrother, stepsister, half brother, or half sister.

Example 1: Advocating Employment.

Bertha, a senior official with the Office of the Secretary, has a new son-in-law who has just graduated from the State university with a degree in literature and is looking for a job. Bertha calls a friend in one of the agencies and asks him to find a job as a writer/editor for the young man. The friend should advise Bertha that she is prohibited from recommending the appointment of her son-in-law.

Example 2: Dropping off an Application.

Dawn, a college sophomore, wants a summer job with ERS where her mom works. Mom offers to drop off Dawn's SF - 171 off in the personnel office on her way to work. Because Dawn's mother is not advocating that she be hired, it is permissible for her drop off the job application. It would also be permissible for her to pick up blank application forms and other hiring literature for Dawn.

Example 3: Emergencies.

Forest fires, raging out of control in Big Trees National Forest, are threatening a nearby town. Additional fire fighters are needed immediately. Larry, Darrell, and Darrell, sons of a Forest Service employee, are given emergency appointments and hired on the spot to help fight the fire. However, as soon as reinforcements are available or the emergency passes, the appointments are terminated.





THINK OUTSIDE OF THE BOX

When you are considering corrective action for an employee's misconduct, sometimes it's appropriate to think outside the box of traditional disciplinary actions. Consider this case:

Chris had been a model employee of the agency for over 20 years. Last month he experienced several stressful personal situations, including a divorce. He went to his physician and was prescribed medication to help him sleep. He mistakenly took one of the pills an hour before his tour began, didn't hear his alarm clock and slept through his tour of duty. He failed to call in or provide an explanation as to why he failed to report. Chris was charged with 8 hours of AWOL and given a letter of reprimand. Chris' incidents of AWOL continued, and he served two suspensions for his continued misconduct. Chris failed to report to work last week and was charged with 40 hours of AWOL. The USDA Guide for Disciplinary Penalties indicates the appropriate penalty is removal. This time Chris opens up to you and tells you about his divorce and the sleeping pills. He also accepts responsibility for his misconduct and states that he would like to contact EAP to help him straighten up his act and save his career. How would you correct Chris' behavior?

When you contact your Employee Relations Specialist, he/she will probably suggest a Last Chance Agreement. It's appropriate to consider a Last Chance Agreement (LCA) if:

- The employee's misconduct warrants removal.
- The employee admits to, and accepts responsibility for, the misconduct.
- The employee claims a disability, personal problem, or other mitigating factor as the reason for, or as a contributing factor in, his/her misconduct.
- The employee shows potential for rehabilitation.
- The employee agrees to waive all rights to file a grievance, appeal, discrimination complaint, or other third-party action.



In our example above, the agency would more than likely conclude that Chris could be a productive employee again. He has admitted to and accepts responsibility for his misconduct, and shows a potential for rehabilitation. A mutually agreed upon LCA will often accomplish the objectives of both the agency and the employee. With the agency providing Chris an opportunity to prove that he can be a productive employee, combined with some assistance from EAP, Chris could save his career. The agency benefits by keeping an experienced employee like Chris, while avoiding the administrative costs associated with traditional discipline and the appeals and/or complaints that follow. In addition, communication between Chris and his supervisor will more than likely improve due to a demonstration of trust and goodwill.

Today most agencies encourage the use of alternatives to traditional disciplinary action to reduce the costs/burdens generally associated with such action, to encourage the rebuilding of relationships between employees and supervisors, and to provide employees an opportunity to demonstrate accountability for their actions. In addition to last chance agree LCAs, possible alternatives to discipline include (1) holding a suspension action in abeyance for a specified period of time (if the employee does not commit any further misconduct during this period, no action is taken); (2) LWOP in lieu of suspension; (3) annual leave donations; (4) a letter of apology to the affected parties; and, (5) community service related to the employee's offense.

Your Employee Relations Specialist will provide advice when you are considering utilizing an alternative discipline agreement, and will consult with you when drafting the agreement offer.





THE ETHICS CORNER

LIFE AFTER THE GOVERNMENT

There is life after leaving the Federal Government, but employees and former employees must comply with the outside employment/post-employment restrictions prior to and during this afterlife. These restrictions bar certain acts by current and former Government employees, which may give the appearance of making unfair use of Government employment and affiliations. Here are a couple of examples:

SITUATION: An employee wishes to negotiate for future employment with a company which he/she deals with in his/her official capacity.

- ❖ The **rule** is that an employee may not participate personally and substantially in any matter involving a person (including company) from whom the employee is seeking non-Federal employment. The employee must disqualify him/herself from making recommendations or decisions which pertain to that person/company, or taking any actions that may affect the person/company. The disqualification, or recusal, should remain in effect until negotiations are complete and/or there is no possibility of a job with the company. See **5 CFR, Part 2635, Subpart F**.

SITUATION: An employee leaves her Government job to work for a private company. This former employee is later given an assignment by her new *private* company to respond to some questions raised during an audit that was conducted by her previous agency.

- ❖ The **rule** is that an employee may assist the non-Federal source in writing its response to the audit questions, but not represent the source in matters before the Government. The employee must also be careful not to use any nonpublic information gained while she was a Federal employee. There are two “bars” involved in these matters. The first is a **permanent bar** if the employee participated “personally and substantially” in a matter at any time that the matter also involved specific parties. The second is a **2-year bar** if the employee did not participate personally or substantially in a matter, but it was pending under her official responsibility during her last year of service and involved specific parties during that time. See **5 CFR, Part 2635, Subpart F** and **5 CFR, Parts 2637 and 2640**.

You may obtain further information regarding the above restrictions at ethics.usda.gov, or by contacting Jacquelyn Bryant, Ethics Specialist, at Jacquelyn.Bryant@oe.usda.gov.





LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

“I have several employees. On occasion, they post things on the bulletin board that I don’t feel are appropriate. These things include posters, order forms, sales announcements, and even a political notice advocating a certain policy. What can/should I do about this situation?”



- ❖ Placing personal items on bulletin boards is a common problem. The rule is that bulletin boards in Government-owned space are to be used only for documents related to official Government business. USDA Departmental Regulation (DR) 4070-735-001, “Employee Responsibilities and Conduct,” Section 11.i prohibits, “Soliciting for the sale of any article, or selling any article, including but not limited to candy or other items for schools or charities, kitchenware or other home furnishings, paper products, cosmetic products; or any other items whatsoever, in person or by distributing or posting literature, advertising material, or any other graphic matter, in or on Government-owned or leased property, or property occupied by USDA, unless authorized by law or regulation.”

Some work locations *may* allow employees to place ads and other personal notices on lunchroom bulletin boards. Two things to remember, however, in regard to this practice:

- ❖ Every employee must be allowed to post permitted notices; and,
- ❖ Any information that would have a negative impact on the workplace, and therefore a negative impact on the agency’s ability to carry out its work, should be prohibited. Such information would include political and religious information, and any discriminatory or otherwise insensitive information.



Experienced Supervisor Applied Workshop

By B.J. Whetstine (William.Whetstine@usda.gov, 301-851-2654)



Experienced Supervisor Applied Workshop



Calling all experienced APHIS, AMS, and FAS supervisors! Are you looking for a development opportunity that will help you refine your supervisory and leadership approaches, make use of your 360 assessment feedback, meet your supervisory training requirements, and develop a peer network of supervisors and managers across USDA? If so, the [Experienced Supervisor Applied Workshop](#) is for you!

This 5-day, in-person training workshop is designed to engage supervisors in activities, skills practice, discussions, and peer learning to analyze, plan for and practice addressing your supervisory challenges. This workshop addresses 4 topic areas mandated by USDA:

- Mentor employees
- Improve employee performance and productivity
- Conduct employee performance appraisals
- Identify & assist employees with unacceptable performance

You will be immersed in experiential learning, developing self-awareness through peer feedback, and practical application of content through case studies and other interactive methods. Participants will use 360 Assessment feedback data to identify competencies on which to target improvement efforts. Full attendance and active participation in this 5-day workshop fully satisfies the USDA requirement for ongoing supervisory training every 3 years. Supervisor approval is required for attendance.

Please note that date of the first scheduled workshop offering has changed:

There are 3 offerings of the workshop in 2019 (select one):

1. [April 1-5, Riverdale, MD](#)
2. [June 3-7, Riverdale, MD](#)
3. [September 9-13, Raleigh, NC](#)

Registration is waitlisted pending confirmation of eligibility requirements:

1. Must be a current supervisor in APHIS, AMS, or FAS
2. Began as a USDA supervisor before January 1, 2017
3. 360 Assessment completed since January 1, 2016

If you have any questions, please contact B.J. Whetstine at William.whetstine@usda.gov.

